

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EB-11 AGR-20 CIAE-00 COME-00 INR-10

LAB-06 NSAE-00 RSC-01 SPC-03 STR-08 TRSE-00 CIEP-02

OMB-01 L-03 DRC-01 /087 W
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P R 191530Z NOV 73

FM AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6373

INFO AMEMBESSY GEORGETOWN

AMEMBASSY KINGSTON

AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN

UNCLAS BRIDGETOWN 1580

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAGR

SUBJ: MEETING OF SUGAR PRODUCING GOVERNMENTS

REF: STATE 225163

1. MEETING DESCRIBED REFTEL REFERS TO GROUP ORGANIZED UNDER AUSPICES OF CARIFTA COUNCIL OF MINISTERS WHICH MET HERE NOVEMBER 12-14. MEETING ATTENDED BY REPRESENTATIVES FROM BARBADOS (HINKSON), JAMAICA (FLETCHER), TRINIDAD (BASOTTI), GUYANA (NOEL), ST. KITTS (DORR), CARICOM SECRETARIAT (CARRINGTON) AND IAN MACDONALD OF WISA. GROUP HAS BEEN GIVEN VAGUE TERMS OF REFERENCE BY CARICOM TO GATHER INFORMATION AND DATA ON SUGAR INDUSTRY FOR PARTICIPATING GOVERNMENTS WHICH APPEAR TO HAVE EXPRESSED INTEREST IN BECOMING MORE INVOLVED IN LONGER RANGE PLANNING FOR INDUSTRY AS WHOLE. GROUP HAS ASKED WISA FOR FORMIDABLE LIST OF DATA ON PRODUCTION AND ESTIMATES AND HAS EVINCE INTEREST IN PURSUING LONG-TIME ISSUES SUCH AS ACQUIRING REFINING CAPABILITY IN WEST INDIES, DROPPING SALES TO EUROPE IN FACE OF HIGHER U.S. PRICES AND REARRANGING PRESENT MARKETING SET UP.

2. WE UNDERSTAND GROUP WILL SUBMIT DATA AND PROCEEDINGS TO
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CARIFTA HEADQUARTERS WHICH MAY ISSUE REPORT TOWARDS END OF

THIS MONTH.

3. LOW KEY INQUIRIES REVEAL THAT FLETCHER OF JAMAICA WAS EXTREMELY CRITICAL OF SUGAR INDUSTRY AT OUTSET OF MEETING. OTHER PARTICIPANTS SEEMED MORE INTENT ON ACQUIRING DATA AND GENERAL OVERALL VIEW OF INDUSTRY SITUATION.

4. WISA INFORMS US THAT IT HAS TRIED TO EDUCATE PARTICIPANTS IN FACTS OF LIFE ABOUT SUGAR INDUSTRY IN AN EFFORT TO DEVELOP RECOGNITION THAT SUGAR REMAINS IMPORTANT ECONOMIC ASSET TO AREA. WISA, CITING MAJOR OBSTACLE TO EXPANSION AS QUOTE NOT KNOWING WHAT GOVERNMENTS OF PRODUCING COUNTRIES ARE GOING TO DO UNQUOTE, HOPES THAT ITS EFFORTS WITH GROUP WILL SERVE TO END NEGATIVE STATEMENTS RE SUGAR MADE FROM TIME TO TIME BY SOME POLITICAL LEADERS IN AREA (E.G. BARROW AND WILLIAMS). WISA EXPRESSED HOPE THAT CLEARER UNDERSTANDING OF ROLE OF SUGAR IN REGION'S ECONOMICS MAY LEAD PRODUCER GOVERNMENTS TO STOP AD HOC AID IN FAVOR OF REAL COORDINATED PLAN WITH INDUSTRY.

5. BARBADOS' PARTICIPANT (HINKSON OF TRADE MINISTRY), POINTING TO RECENT TENTATIVE USDA PROPOSAL TO ELIMINATE QUOTA SYSTEM, STATED THAT THERE WERE TOO MANY UNKNOWN FACTORS AT PRESENT TO MAKE ANY KIND OF LONG RANGE PLANS. HINKSON HAS REQUESTED MEETING WITH EMBOFF EARLY THIS WEEK TO DISCUSS SOME OF DATA OBTAINED. WILL REPORT ANY FURTHER SIGNIFICANT INFORMATION.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: SUGAR, MEETINGS, PRICES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 19 NOV 1973
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: n/a
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 JAN 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973BRIDGE01580
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: n/a
From: BRIDGETOWN
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t19731126/aaaaaszkl.tel
Line Count: 90
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: STATE 225163
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: hilburpw
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 29 JAN 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <29-Jan-2002 by chappeld>; APPROVED <20 FEB 2002 by hilburpw>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: MEETING OF SUGAR PRODUCING GOVERNMENTS
TAGS: EAGR, EIND, XL
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005